

Mr. Speaker, what a monumental achievement to be married for 50 years. It is an honor to represent a couple like the Linck's—they are an inspiration to us all in southern Illinois and I am proud to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### POWER VACUUM AT PANAMA CANAL

**HON. PETER T. KING**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. KING. Mr. Speaker, on October 5, 1997 The New York Times ran an interesting story by Larry Rohter on a power vacuum developing at the Panama Canal. The importance of the Canal to the United States' economic interests should not be underestimated with over 200,000 jobs in our Nation dependent on a safe and efficient Canal operation. For example, one out of every four vessels entering or leaving the Port of New York and New Jersey transits the Panama Canal.

I commend to my colleagues the Rohter story with the hope that officials at the Pentagon will not neglect our responsibilities in Panama over the next 27 months.

[From the New York Times, October 5, 1997]

AS PANAMA CANAL TRANSFER NEARS, MORE JOCKEYING TO FILL A POWER VACUUM

(By Larry Rohter)

MIAMI, Oct. 4.—The sudden resignation of the chairman of the Panama Canal Commission, with barely two years remaining before the United States yields control of the vital waterway, has created a power vacuum that Panama is now maneuvering to fill, American officials and current and former canal officials say.

Meeting in a closed session here this week, the nine-member binational body, created by the Panama Canal Treaties 20 years ago, chose the United States Secretary of the Army, Togo D. West, Jr., to succeed Joe R. Reeder, an American, who resigned on Sept. 15.

But in a nod to Panama's increasingly assertive posture regarding the running of the canal, the board also created a new position, that of vice chairman, and named a Panamanian, Jorge E. Ritter, to the job.

As Minister of State for Canal Affairs and a member of the commission's board, Mr. Ritter is already the Panamanian Government's principal negotiator on canal matters. This summer, President Ernesto Perez Balladares enhanced Mr. Ritter's already considerable influence by naming him director of the Panama Canal Authority, the entity that will assume management of the waterway when the United States hands it over to Panama on Dec. 31, 1999.

Mr. West, on the other hand, is relatively new to canal matters and remains preoccupied with the Army's sexual harassment scandals, the deployment of American troops in Bosnia and a host of other issues. This has led to concerns among some shipping executives and other canal specialists that he will be unable to devote the time required to supervise the handover properly and to assure that the Canal Treaties are properly implemented.

"It makes no sense in the heavy-duty transition that is under way to have the Secretary of the Army as chairman of the Canal Commission," said Robert R. McMillan, Mr. Reeder's predecessor as board chairman. "There is no way he can do justice to the po-

sition, no matter how many colonels from his retinue he has swarming around the Canal. With this job, it's hands on or nothing; you can't tune in just for board meetings and be an effective chairman."

In a telephone interview Friday, Mr. West, a lawyer and former general counsel of the Department of Defense, said his new post "has always been a part-time job" and that "the occasions on which the chairmanship was the sole duty of whoever held it are rare, if any." Naming a Panamanian as vice chairman "probably should have been done before now," he added, and "provides a further sign of the spirit of cooperation" between the two countries.

"We have every confidence that Secretary West will be fully capable of handling his responsibilities as Secretary of the Army as well as chairman of the Panama Canal Commission board of directors," said Capt. Michael Doubleday, a Defense Department spokesman in Washington.

Captain Doubleday noted that former Army Secretary Michael P. Stone also served as chairman of the Panama Canal commission's board, from early 1990 to January 1993.

Like Mr. Pérez Balladares' other nominees to the future Canal Authority, which include four members of his or his wife's family, Mr. Ritter has close ties to the President and the governing Democratic Revolutionary Party. During the rabidly anti-American dictatorship of Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega, who was then leader of the party, Mr. Ritter was Panama's Ambassador to Colombia and then Foreign Minister.

In 1992, after the American invasion that toppled and captured him, General Noriega was convicted here of drug trafficking, racketeering and money laundering to aid Colombian drug cartels and was sentenced to 40 years in prison. During his trial, a witness testified that Mr. Ritter, using his diplomatic privileges while Ambassador in Bogotá, had purchased a Mercedes-Benz on behalf of a leading Colombian drug dealer in return for \$50,000. Mr. Ritter has denied that he did anything improper.

"Having to deal with Jorge Ritter is a sizable assignment," one American official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "That's why it is vitally important to the national interest to have someone in place who can really focus on the situation on a day-to-day basis and provide continuity all the way through 1999."

Canal officials say that Panama viewed Mr. Reeder's departure, which American officials attributed to tensions between him and Mr. West, as an opportunity to strengthen its presence on the commission. There had even been informal suggestions that the new chairman be a Panamanian, they said, which led to negotiations aimed at avoiding a show of discord at the body's next public meeting, scheduled to take place in New York this month.

Mr. West said that "if there was any such discussion in the margins, I had no sign of that." He described Mr. Ritter as "a very impressive person, intellectually very sharp, the right person to do this job," but, when asked if he himself expected to remain as chairman of the commission through 1999, he did not answer directly.

"There is every intention for all of us to be a stabilizing and not a destabilizing influence," he said. Though "neither I nor the Administration have any present plans for me not to see this through," he added, "the half life of political appointees in any administration is of such a nature that I have already exceeded my expected term."

DON PIENKOS, 1997 OUTSTANDING AMERICAN OF POLISH DESCENT

**HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in heartfelt tribute to my good friend, Don Pienkos, who has been honored by the National Polish Alliance's Milwaukee Society as the 1997 Outstanding American of Polish Descent.

Don has for many years played such an important role in the Polish-American community in the Milwaukee area and nationally. He's been on the board of directors for the Polish National Alliance and is very involved with its Milwaukee Society. He is also active in the Polish American Congress and Milwaukee's Polishfest festival. Dr. Pienkos has also long been a supporter of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America and the Kosciuszko Foundation.

Currently the director of undergraduate studies for the Political Science Department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Don Pienkos' special area of interest is Eastern Europe and the nations of the former Soviet Union. He has taught at UWM for nearly 30 years, working to instill in his students an appreciation for and understanding of Eastern European politics and culture. In addition, he helped organize UWM's committees on Russian and Eastern European studies, as well as Polish studies.

As a natural outgrowth of his interest, knowledge and pride in his Polish heritage, Don has authored several books on Poland and on Polish-American organizations. These informative works provide us with wonderful accounts of the efforts Polish-Americans have made on behalf of the Polish people and fellow Polish-Americans.

Most recently, Don has been active in Poland's struggle to rebuild its government and economy after the fall of eastern bloc communism. He has worked with elected community leaders from Poland to train them in local democratic government and was in Poland to observe and write about their 1995 elections. Don was also honored to have met with President Clinton and Vice-President GORE to discuss North Atlantic Treaty Organization enlargement, and has worked hard toward the goal of full NATO membership for Poland.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor Professor Donald Pienkos for his outstanding work in the Polish-American community. I congratulate him on being awarded the Milwaukee Society's Outstanding American of Polish descent and extend my best wishes for a successful Pulaski Day celebration and continued success for years to come. Sto Lat!

#### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

**HON. RON KIND**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, today we begin the 6th week of legislation business since returning from the August district work period. Each weekend I return home to western Wisconsin

and meet with the people whom I represent. Each weekend I have to inform them that we have not taken any action on campaign finance reform. Mr. Speaker, the people of my district are tired of hearing that another week has gone without campaign finance reform.

Over the past 6 weeks in Congress we have found the time to tackle some very difficult matters. Yet that action has done nothing to restore the public's faith in this institution. The reason for this lack of faith is our failure to clean our own house. The public is demanding that we eliminate the influence of big money in the political system before they will trust us to serve the interests of the people. Failure to even consider a bill on campaign finance reform is only feeding that cynicism.

Instead of banning soft money Congress gave huge tax breaks to tobacco companies. Instead of requiring special interests to disclose what they spend on campaign advertising Congress continues to allow those special interest groups to run unregulated political ads more than a year before an election. Instead of instituting more stringent campaign reporting requirements Congress conducts repetitive, partisan inquiries into past campaign abuses.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to restore the public's faith in our democratic system. It is time to show the voters that we have the ability to clean our own house. It is time we pass meaningful campaign finance reform.

#### FAMILY PLANNING FUNDING

### HON. MARTIN OLAV SABO

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. SABO. Mr. Speaker, the Foreign Operations conference report soon will be considered by the House. As we consider that legislation, I want to call my colleague's attention to this editorial on family planning funding which appeared recently in the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

#### EDITORIAL: FAMILY PLANNING—SAVING THE WORLD'S CHILDREN, AND MOTHERS

Before they settle into office, perhaps new members of Congress should be required to visit a developing country. They'd see what it's like to scratch a livelihood out of the dirt, to strain to feed more mouths than the available food can fill. They'd see how overpopulation spawns a cycle of poverty, disease, illiteracy and environmental devastation. And these world travelers would likely return to the Capitol knowing something that many of today's lawmakers can't seem to grasp: If Americans want to save lives and improve health overseas, funding family planning is the surest bet.

There's really no disputing this; no credible group even tries. The World Bank—hardly a bastion of bleeding hearts—says investing in contraception is a remarkably cost-effective way to improve child and maternal health. Yet U.S. lawmakers have been mysteriously reluctant to take note of this wisdom. In recent years they've devoted only a pittance of foreign-aid funds to family planning, and then have bent over backwards to keep from spending it.

This year's backbend comes courtesy of the House of Representatives, which has passed a "global gag rule" and other debilitating amendments to its version of the foreign operations appropriations bill. The bill

is being considered along with its cleaner Senate companion in a conference committee that convened Thursday.

The House's gag rule is a variation on an old theme, born of the hope that holding family planning programs hostage can somehow stop abortion. Though federal law has barred the use of U.S. funds for foreign abortions for two decades, the House plan goes one grand step further. It would bar family-planning groups overseas from receiving U.S. funds if—using their own, non-U.S. money—the groups provide abortions, openly support abortion or even speak to their governments about making abortion safer. The House bill would also cut off \$25 million to the U.N.'s Population Fund unless the agency pulls out of China, where forced abortions have been reported.

Whatever its intent, it's hard to imagine that this scheme will actually do much to curb abortion. Its chief effect will likely be to weaken the network of family-planning agencies on which millions of the globe's most destitute contraceptive-seekers depend. And since contraception is the best anti-abortion program around, making it hard to get is sure to spur fresh demand for abortion. Even now, unwanted pregnancies result in about 50 million abortions every year—many performed in dangerous, often deadly, conditions. What sensible soul would want to add to that number?

#### TRIBUTE TO DONALD J. BABB

### HON. ROY BLUNT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend Donald J. Babb as this year's recipient of the American Hospital Association's Shirley Ann Monroe Leadership Development Award. Mr. Babb serves as chief executive officer of Citizens Memorial Hospital [CMH] and executive director of Citizens Memorial Health Care Foundation in Bolivar, MO. The Monroe Award is given annually to a chief executive officer of a small or rural hospital.

Don has been with CMH since it first opened its doors in the fall of 1982. In fact, Don was hired before construction even began, and was the hospital's first employee. He was hand-picked by the hospital's original board of directors to come to Bolivar to help build CMH from the ground up. And, build it from the ground up he did.

Because of Don's hard work and vision, CMH has grown from a 45,000 square foot facility with 90 employees to a 300,000 square foot facility with over 1,000 employees. But the hospital's phenomenal growth cannot be measured merely in terms of physical size. Under Don's leadership CMH has evolved into a fully-integrated health care delivery system to meet the growing needs of its service area, which has grown from 17,000 to nearly 80,000 people in only 15 years. Today, CMH includes a 74 bed acute care hospital, an intensive care unit, a full-service outpatient clinic, rehabilitation services, a home health agency, 12 physician clinics, an ambulance service, and a residential care facility. The hospital will also add a dialysis clinic this fall.

The health care industry has faced many changes in the past two decades, and Don has confronted those changes head-on. Because of the rising costs of health care Don

formed Missouri Advantage, the first Health Maintenance Organization [HMO] for a small, rural hospital in Missouri, and one of only six in the Nation at that time. In 1996, Don expanded Missouri Advantage to cover three additional rural hospitals in the State.

Don has consistently used his position to look for new and better ways to identify and address the health care needs in his community. In 1995, he formed Community Health Assessment Resource Teams [CHART] in five counties within the CMH service area. Don has used CHART to bring together professionals, lay people, and volunteers to address issues like teen pregnancy, infant mortality, and the acute shortage of health care professionals in rural communities.

In spite of Don's personal success, he has never lost touch with the community he serves or the people he works with. It is not uncommon for Don to take time out to visit personally with the employees of CMH and let them know that he appreciates their efforts. His is a great example. I would like to thank Don once again for having the courage to lead, and to congratulate him on receiving this well deserved honor.

#### 86TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

### HON. GERALD D. KLECZKA

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate President Lee Teng-hui and Vice President Lien Chan of the Republic of China on Taiwan as they celebrate the 86th anniversary of the founding of their nation. Their commitment to the sometimes-difficult task of forging a democratic nation is to be lauded.

Also, I would like to extend my best to Representative Jason Hu, who is returning to Taiwan to assume the duties of Foreign Minister. If his tenure here in the United States is any indication of the future, Dr. Hu will be a first-rate foreign minister for the Taiwanese Government. His efforts to forge ties between our countries are commendable and will surely serve him well.

Finally, I ask my colleagues to join me in offering encouragement to the Taiwanese Government in its continued efforts to build a democratic nation.

#### READING EXCELLENCE ACT

### HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 6, 1997*

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, for many years I have led the battle to combat illiteracy in the United States, through the development of the Even Start Family Literacy Program and through the improvement of the Adult Education Act.

What has been missing has been a focus of preventing reading difficulties from developing in the first place. We have several major Federal education programs focused on assisting children who are experiencing difficulties learning to read, such as title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Act and the Individuals